



TOWN OF KITTERY

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Nancy Colbert Puff
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Library Committee Minutes 10-8-15

Present: George Dow, Steve Workman, Tom Newbold, Kristina DeMarco
Debra Kam, and members of the public - Doug Greene and Barry Fitzpatrick

Staff: Nancy Colbert Puff, Lee Perkins

Absent: Tom Emerson

The meeting convened at 9:00 pm.

1. Approval of the Minutes of 9/10/15.

George moved to approve the draft and Tom Newbold seconded the motion. All voted in favor to approve.

2. Review of Site Plan Map; Discussion of Building Footprint, Size

The Committee established its next meeting dates, all to occur at 9 am: October 22, November 5, and November 18.

Nancy reviewed the work of the Athletic Fields Master Plan, noting that the objective of the plan was to provide an understanding of community needs for athletic fields into the future, and to identify ways in which those needs might be met. The plan is broad in both scope and timeframe, and should not be confused with design documents. While a representative of the Recreation/Community Center participated throughout the process, even the Board of Directors has not yet reviewed the plan presented here. The Plan will be presented at Town Council on October 26th.

For the Community Center site, the Plan illustrates how a large, multi-use (soccer, lacrosse, football) field, and a little league baseball field could be constructed to the rear of the KCC building, and how a softball field, playground, basketball, and tennis could also be accommodated on site. The plan also provides walking paths that connect to the Rogers Park trail system, expanded parking, and improved circulation around the KCC building. Nancy pointed out that the parking and circulation illustrated in the plan is not, at this time, coordinated with the Library's plan.

The Committee then turned its attention to the Aaron Cohen report, produced for the Library in 2011, which Architect Mike Lassel had previously explained provided the baseline guidance for the overall sizing of the building and its functions. Nancy noted that while the report was posted on line for all to review, it behooves the Committee in developing some familiarity with its recommendations, since one of the questions the Committee is charged with answering related to

building size. Nancy emphasized that the report needed to be considered within the current planning effort, but thought it important for the Committee to be familiar with the available information that has been in the public record.

She highlighted three data points in the report to begin to put into context what the report contemplated for a 20,000 s.f. structure:

- The number of books was projected to increase from 47,937 to 76,800, an increase of 60%;
- The number of seats was projected to increase from 114 to 265, an increase of 132%;
- The number of staff was projected to increase from 5.8 to 11, a 90% increase.

Lee pointed out that current planning has already made the report out of date to some extent, and that the volumes were no longer projected at that increase, nor did the staffing projection take into account a single-story, courtyard design that reduces staffing requirements. Tom supported the Committee's need to become more familiar with these details. George commented that the Library needs to demonstrate its purpose as a community resource, and help people understand how the current building and offerings compare with industry standards. And that in so doing, the Library can demonstrate how it is responsibly planning for the future.

Doug Greene pointed out that there are many in the community who are attached to the historic Rice building, and that the planning must take its future into consideration. Nancy noted that the Committee's charge includes that question.

Kristina echoed the need to look towards the future, and that the Committee should understand the progress of space planning from time of the Cohen report to the present. Lee noted that the Cohen report was somewhat generic compared with the work that Mike has done. For example, the report will offer a standard for how much space per person is needed for a function, but Mike has drilled down into the details and translated them into the current floor plans – e.g. how many children attend story time? Where should they be located in the building?

Debra said that she has followed the Library efforts in both York and Portsmouth, and that while Portsmouth achieved a great deal of “buy in” from the community, and that York, by contrast, was contentious and was hobbled for years without the same support. She became involved in this effort to help Kittery build the support needed for a successful effort. She noted that transparency about the process was extremely important, and that the Committee should understand how libraries are expected to change into the future. She gave an example that there seems to be popular misconception that books are going away, and that reading on electronic devices is predominant and will continue to be. The industry has, in fact, seen the opposite – that books are back, and will likely remain a strong preference for people.

Steve commented on the numbers, and that the Cohen report represents foundational numbers. He offered that all of the conclusions about size, cost, etc. may be correct, but, harkening back to math class, “you will only receive full credit if you show your work.” If the numbers have changed since the report, let's explain how. That there needs to be a full explanation of how the current proposal was achieved – what comparisons have been/can be made, what variables have driven the proposal, etc. Tom agreed, and thought that reviewing the Cohen report will help with this. He pointed out that the community's reference point is quite outdated, and that what Kittery is used to in its Library as “normal,” might represent an even larger disparity from what a reasonable standard of expectation should be.

Lee offered the Committee a field trip to Mattapan to gain in understanding of what a 20,000 s.f. Library is. In addition, Barry offered a site walk to the Committee.

George emphasized the importance of gaining the community's buy-in, and illustrating the benefit to the community. The community should understand how the Library use will interact with the Community Center, and how the square footage of the building translates into value to the community. Understanding the Cohen report, how things have proceeded since then, and how the Library proposal fits into the context of standards, what other communities have done, etc. are all important. Tom thought communicating a values statement, and making clear what the opportunity for return on investment is, is likewise important.

Nancy handed hard copies of the Cohen report to the Committee, and all agreed that the next agenda would focus on gaining a better understanding of its contents, and how other library data might offer some useful context.

George motioned to adjourn, and Tom N. seconded. All voted in favor. The next meeting is scheduled for October 22nd.